

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An award point service system, comprising:
 - a point issuing device that issues points to a customer who purchases an article;
 - 5 a memory that stores data of the points issued to the customer;
 - a data access permitting device that permits the data of the points issued to the customer to be read from the memory; and
 - a point reducing device that allows use of at least a part of the points read from the memory by subtracting the at least points from the data of the points
 - 10 stored in the memory; wherein
 - at least one virtual store established on a network is accessible to the point issuing device; and wherein
 - at least one actual store is accessible to the point reducing device.
2. An award point service system according to claim 1, wherein the at least
- 15 one actual store is accessible to the point issuing device.
3. An award point service system according to claim 1, wherein the at least one virtual store is accessible to the point reducing device.
4. An award point service system according to claim 2, wherein the at least one virtual store is accessible to the point reducing device.
- 20 5. An award point service system according to claim 1, further comprising a managing device that manages the points issued by the point issuing device and the points reduced by the point reducing device.
6. An award point service system according to claim 2, further comprising a managing device that manages the points issued by the point issuing device and the
- 25 points reduced by the point reducing device.
7. An award point service system according to claim 3, further comprising a managing device that manages the points issued by the point issuing device and the points reduced by the point reducing device.
8. An award point service system according to claim 4, further comprising a
- 30 managing device that manages the points issued by the point issuing device and the points reduced by the point reducing device.
9. An award point service system according to claim 1, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the

terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

10. An award point service system according to claim 2, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

11. An award point service system according to claim 4, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

12. An award point service system according to claim 3, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

13. An award point service system according to claim 5, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

14. An award point service system according to claim 9, wherein the recording medium comprises a medium used for making a payment.

15. An award point service system according to claim 2, wherein the memory device includes a first memory that stores points issued to the customer in the virtual store and a second memory that stores points issued to the customer in the actual store.

16. An award point service system according to claim 4, wherein the memory device includes a first memory that stores points issued to the customer in the virtual store and a second memory that stores points issued to the customer in the actual store.

17. An award point service system according to claim 6, wherein the memory device includes a first memory that stores points issued to the customer in the virtual store and a second memory that stores points issued to the customer in the actual store.

18. An award point service system according to claim 10, wherein the memory device includes a first memory that stores points issued to the customer in the

virtual store and a second memory that stores points issued to the customer in the actual store.

19. An award point service system, comprising:

5 a point issuing device that issues points to a customer who purchases an article;

a memory that stores data of the points issued to the customer;

a data access permitting device that permits the data of the points issued to the customer to be read from the memory; and

10 a point reducing device that allows use of at least a part of the points read from the memory by subtracting the at least points from the data of the points stored in the memory; wherein

at least one virtual store established on a network is accessible to the point reducing device; and wherein

at least one actual store is accessible to the point issuing device.

15 20. An award point service system according to claim 19, wherein the at least one virtual store is accessible to the point issuing device.

21. An award point service system according to claim 19, wherein the at least one actual store is accessible to the point reducing device.

20 22. An award point service system according to claim 20, wherein the memory includes a first memory that stores points issued to the customer in the virtual store and a second memory that stores points issued to the customer in the actual store.

25 23. An award point service system according to claim 19, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

30 24. An award point service system according to claim 20, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

25. An award point service system according to claim 21, wherein the data access permitting device comprises a terminal provided in the actual store, and the terminal receives the data of the points from a recording medium owned by the customer and supplies the recording medium with the data of the points.

26. An award point service system according to claim 23, wherein the recording medium comprises a medium used for making a payment.

27. A recording medium used in a point service system including an award point issuing device that issues points to a customer who purchases an article, a memory that stores data of the points issued to the customer, a data access permitting device that permits the data of the points issued to the customer to be read from the memory, and a point reducing device that allows use of at least a part of the points read from the memory by subtracting the at least points from the data of the points stored in the memory, wherein

the recording medium transmits and receives the data of the points to and from the data access permitting device, and wherein

the recording medium stores the points issued or reduced by any of at least one virtual store and at least one actual store.

28. A recording medium according to claim 27, comprising an IC card having an IC chip.

29. An award point service management method comprising the steps of:
issuing points to a customer who purchases an article in at least one of virtual stores established on a network;
recording the issued points; and
subtracting points used by the customer from the data of the points stored in a memory in at least one of actual stores such that the points are used by the customer for purchasing an article in the at least one of actual stores.

30. An award point service management method comprising the steps of:
issuing points to a customer who purchases an article in at least one of actual stores;
recording the issued points; and
subtracting points used by the customer from the data of the points stored in a memory in at least one of virtual stores such that the points are used by the customer for purchasing an article in the at least one of virtual stores.